HOW TO GIVE SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATIONS: A FIVE-STEP PROCESS
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1. Plan
Always know exactly what you want your presentation to accomplish and what you want your audience to do with your message. Everything you will say and do in the course of your presentation must be selected according to this prime performance objective.
Questions to ask of yourself as you plan your presentation:
- Who is your audience?
- What is the key point of your presentation?
- What are your 4-6 key ideas? Are they clearly stated?

Next, do the following:
- Create an outline in short sentences for distribution.
- On a sheet of paper (to refer by you at time of presentation), condense your ideas to key words.
- Choose a presentation technique:
  — Will you reinforce your key ideas by providing evidence for your points (key facts, statistics, analogies or demonstrations)?
  — Will you use visuals (charts or graphs; images or pictures; quotes or cartoons)?
  — Will you want to involve your audience? How? (Will you invite audience to ask questions? Will you ask questions of your audience? Will your handout provide discussion points?)

2. Prepare
Establish a positive mindset: after serious planning, visualize your success; accept nervous tension.
Know your material: Review key ideas, and present your view (you are not necessarily the expert on the subject, but you have views that you can express in sentences such as “this is what I am thinking about …” or “from my perspective …”).
Select a snappy title, and prepare an engaging opening sentence.
Prepare a memorable set of closing remarks: offer a challenge; stress relevance of your presentation to the field; summarize key points.

Your preparation, once completed, should have the following features:
- Relevance to your audience
- Quality of content
- Eye-appeal and visibility
- Memorability

Prepare and pull together all the tools you’ll need to succeed as far in advance as you can:
- Your personal speaking skills
- Your audience-focused presentation text, all your handout materials and any product, props and audiovisual equipment you’ll need.

Review:
- Content of your slides with space for notes
- Important background information
- Detailed data, models, graphs
- Citations or bibliography
- Be sure your handout includes: title of presentation, your name, your title, institution, address, email, phone number, FAX number, URL (if applicable)
3. **Practice**
Always run through your entire presentation exactly as you plan to present it, so you’ll know all the parts work together before you get in front of an audience. Think ahead about distracting elements that may take away attention from your message.

Questions you should keep in mind:
- What is the size of the room and how will that affect your presentation?
- Is there enough light to read your notes?
- Ask a friend to listen to your presentation:
  - Check your mannerisms
  - Check the volume and tone of your voice
  - Check your visuals

4. **Perform**
Every presentation is a personal performance. The more of yourself you put into the presentation, the more effectively you’ll communicate your message. Keep the audience involved by having good eye contact, dynamic body movement, carefully crafted verbal phrasing and a well-balanced vocal variety.

  - Establish good rapport: be yourself; be sincere; talk to your audience’s expressed interests; involve your audience.
  - Hold their attention: speak slowly; breathe naturally; be clear and concise; tell a story; use vivid words; be enthusiastic.
  - Don’t forget to … watch your time!

See below: “Top Ten Major Mistakes” of presenters.

5. **Polish**
Good presentations always depend on good follow-up evaluation. Always ask for and use objective evaluations from yourself and others to help you improve with each new effort. Every professional speaker does this, and so should you.

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**Top Ten Major Mistakes** (Malouf, 1993)

10. Lack of enthusiasm
9. Lack of eye contact
8. Inappropriate pace (not too much material to cover; restrict yourself to 4 key ideas)
7. Distracting or very detailed visuals; distracting verbal expressions
6. Failure to practice-practice-practice
5. Poor preparation
4. Material is too technical
3. Your presentation suffers from information overload
2. Material is not suited to your audience
1. Failure to speak to time

**Source:**